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Allen-Scott Report

JFK's Cigars Cuban; Did Father Put Up \$1 Million for Ransom?

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT

President Kennedy is smoking Cuban cigars despite his ban on their importation.

Secretary Dean Rusk is the source of this intriguing bit of information.

It was disclosed at a social gathering in the State Department during the recent holidays. Much to the surprise of newsmen, Rusk came early and stayed late. Usually he drops in briefly and hurries off. This time he was most affable and chatty.



Mr. Allen

Taking advantage of this exceptional opportunity, one reporter on the chance of getting a Cuban clue, asked, "Mr. Secretary, without revealing any policy secrets can you tell us when we might get our Cuban cigars back?"

With a smile Rusk replied, "If you're really interested, I'll tell you how you can obtain them." When the correspondent nodded eagerly, Rusk continued, "Go to one of your diplomatic friends whose country has a mission in Havana and ask him to get you a supply of these cigars."

AT THIS ANOTHER reporter chimed in, "But Mr. Secretary, that wouldn't be patriotic."

"Come, come now," chuckled Rusk. "Surely you have been around Washington long enough to have lost your virginity."

"How did you find out about this contraband?" asked the first newsmen.

"Well," explained Rusk, "that's how the President gets his cigars."

The State Department chief threw no light on whether foreign embassies present Cuban

cigars to the President, or just how they do reach him. But Rusk left no doubt that the President is enjoying banned Cuban cigars.

During this amiable chatting with the reporters, Rusk urged them to check their foreign policy stories with his department.

"You will find," he said earnestly, "that we aren't hard to get along with."

WHO DID IT? — Congressional sources are buzzing over one startling answer to Washington's current big mystery—who was Attorney General Robert Kennedy's great good friend who put up \$1 million of the \$2.9 million in cash that Fidel Castro demanded in the ransom agreement on the liberation of the Bay of Pigs prisoners.

According to this congressional information, it was former Ambassador Joseph Kennedy, ailing father of the President and the Attorney General.

There is no confirmation of any kind of this backstage word. Bobby has been on a skiing vacation in Colorado, and Justice Department officials close to him shrug their shoulders and claim they don't know.

But the report persists, and is given considerable credence in congressional quarters.

One White House authority asked about the matter replied, "I would say that in due time full disclosure will be made of the entire ransom transaction; who gave what and how much. This deal is still incomplete, and until it is closed, it would be inadvisable to publicly air details. But I am quite sure that in the end everything will be made public."

One thing is certain: Regardless of what the administration does, there will be vehement congressional insistence for a full accounting of the ransom affair.

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